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The Role of Humor in Television Advertisement: **A Study Regarding Portuguese Consumers' Emotions** **and Reactions**

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#1535

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Humor in advertising is like a gun in the hands of a child. You have to know how to use it. Otherwise, it can blow up on you.

Miller, 1992

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----- Abstract -----

The purpose of this study is to explore the humorous side of television advertisement and its impact on Portuguese consumers' hearts, minds and wallets. Both qualitative (through in-depth interviews) and quantitative (through an on-line survey and subsequent statistical data analysis) methods were used, guaranteeing a more consistent, strong and valid research. Twenty-five interviews with randomly chosen consumers were conducted face-to-face and three interviews via e-mail with marketers and television advertisers were performed in order to explore profoundly the subject. Moreover, 360 people have answered the on-line survey. Through the analysis of the data collected humor perception was found to be positively correlated with persuasion and intention to purchase the product; intention to share the advert; message comprehension; product liking and development of positive feelings towards the brand and brand credibility variables. The main implication of these findings relies on the fact that humor in advertising is able to boost its effectiveness.

Keywords: Humor; Advertising; Consumer Decision Making Process; Purchasing

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----- Introduction -----

Case Background

Humor is omnipresent in everybody's life, being a part of all forms of social interactions. We consider it to be such a natural part of our existence, that we often don't repute it as a serious object of scientific investigation. However, it shows up as being a truly challenging and mysterious issue to examine and, in particular, the role it plays in advertisement. The importance of the study of advertisement lies on its ability to profoundly shape buying behaviors and quotidian judgments. The economic impact of advertising is also often disregarded. According to Berger (2004), people are exposed every year to an average of approximately 40.000 commercials. Moreover, there are over \$500 billion spent globally and yearly in advertisement and about 25.000 new products (Zenith Optimedia Report 2013). The most common communication medium used is precisely television, accounting for about 40% of global ad spend share. However, this share is predicted to start declining after 2015, when the internet advertisement will increasingly gain ground (see Appendix 1). This research is, hence, valuable and relevant for many professionals, including marketers, brand managers, advertisers, managers, marketing and management students and, ultimately, for consumers in general, as we all are.

As previous investigations provide mixed results with unclear answers, this study is needed to gain an updated knowledge and straight conclusions regarding the topic. As Linda Francis (1994) suggests: "There is more to explain about humor than just why it is funny", which indicates a deep ocean of unexplored spaces in the study of humorous advertisement.

Research Questions and Goals of the study

According to Malhotra (2002), establishing research goals is the key to narrow the study's scope and focus efficiently on the main issues. This research aims to explore the effects of humorous television commercials on Portuguese consumers regarding the following variables:

- **Persuasion and intention to purchase**

Research Question: Are humorous commercials truly persuasive marketing tools?

Hypothesis: As funnier the advert is perceived, more persuasive it becomes.

- **Intention to share and diffuse the advert on social networks**

RQ: Do people usually share humorous commercials with acquaintances?

H: As funnier an advert is perceived, the more buzz is generated around it.

- **Message comprehension**

RQ: Do humorous commercials jeopardize message comprehension?

H: Humorous advertisement enhances message comprehension.

- **Product liking and development of positive feelings towards the brand**

RQ: Are humorous commercials able to change pre-existing judgments and opinions?

H: Adverts comprising humor are able to positively shape the brand image.

- **Brand credibility**

RQ: Do funny commercials impact the credibility of the brand?

H: Humorous commercials impact positively the brand credibility.

- **Differences in gender regarding humor perceptions**

RQ: Are men and women targeted in the same manner regarding funny adverts?

H: Both genders have similar perceptions of humorous commercials.

----- Literature Review -----

In the following section it will be explored the knowledge that has been gained over the previous years of extensive investigation in the fields of marketing, psychology and consumer behavior. It resulted from a broad research which included articles, published scientific papers, books and on-line websites.

Advertisement

In order to boost their sales, companies need to differentiate their product and, consequently, their advertisement's strategy. Creativity is, hence, an asset in the world of communication and many marketers bet on humorous contents as marketing vehicles to reach their target audiences.

There are many factors affecting consumption patterns such as culture, social status and purchasing power, reference groups, etc. However, advertisement can truthfully impact consumer's habits and cultivate in people's minds the seed of the desire to purchase. Hence, the objectives of a successful marketing campaign are: capturing people's attention, arouse their interest and provoke desire, lead to memorization and trigger purchasing actions, while informing them. Steps required to formulate an advertisement campaign are enlightened in detail in the Appendix 2.

The fact that people are increasingly capable of choosing the television contents they want to watch due to the appearance of new devices and technologies that allow us to travel back in time and skip the programs we don't want to see, constitutes a menace to television advertisement. Hence, it is imperative to transform marketing contents in something attractive, appealing, amusing and enjoyable. One way to do so is precisely using humorous messages.

Humor

Some dictionaries describe humor as a joke, which is defined as being a "brief story with an amusing twist". Although many definitions exist in dictionaries, books and articles, there is not a single generally accepted one. Due to this lack of consensus in its definition, humor shows up as something difficult to construe and as an umbrella concept. Moreover, according to Weinberger and Gulas (1992), a standard definition cannot comprise all of the several forms through which humor can show up to us. As the world has evolved, the scope of humor has also been broadening and new means of

communication provide new kinds of comicality. Nevertheless, there are some types of humor commonly used by researchers when conducting studies in this topic. A brief explanation of each one of them can be found in the Appendix 5, as well as a schematic representation of the historical usage of humor in advertisement (Appendix 3) and the three major theoretical schools in what regards its explanation (Appendix 4).

Nowadays, owing to an excess of information, our brain is obligated to filter it, paying only special attention to what we consider relevant for shopping decisions. Hence, advertisement is more prone to be successful if consumers dedicate their full attention to it and, therefore, marketers frequently try to gather their consumer's attention by creating a stimulus not only personal relevant, but also enjoyable and easy to process. According to some authors, humor can definitely be a powerful attention-getting tool. To Tellis (1997), it relaxes, entertains and distracts the audience, leading many public speakers to frequently initiate their speech with a touch of comedy. They believe it helps to establish good mood and gain acceptance in order to easily convey the message: "At the end of humor, the person is always listening. They want to hear what is said next" (Jeffrey Gitomer). This so good acceptance by the audience can be confirmed by Nielsen Global Survey of Trust in Advertising (in the Appendix 6), which collected answers from 29,000 respondents in more than 58 countries, showing that humorous commercials dominated the preferences of the sample population. Besides, as it can be seen in the Appendix 8, six out of the top ten YouTube Channels in 2013 are based on comedy and through the analysis of the data from the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, evidence was found that emotional campaigns (where humorous advertisements are also included) generated superior profit, strongly producing positive business effects and outstripping rational and serious ones (Les Binet & Field 2013).

To sum up, some brands choose to bet on funny commercials instead of serious ones like their competitors in order to acquire a differentiator point and a unique personality, hoping to easily reach audiences and gain market share.

Usage of Humor in Communication Means

In what regards the usage of humor in communication means, the available literature is controversial and often imprecise. Despite not being as rife in other means of communication as in television, humor is often used in radio (Weinberger & Campbell 1991). The type of waggery and its purpose is also different across communication means. Generally speaking, crack jokes and jocular commentaries are often made in radio, while newspapers provide us with funny cartoons and anecdotes. In television we can encounter a dense forest made of humorous contents, including comedies, funny shows, humorous commercials, etc. Furthermore, according to Clow (2007), witticism is used in approximately 24 percent of prime time American television advertisements. To Beard (2008), about one in five TV commercials encompass humorous messages. Analogous or superior usage rates have been reported in international investigations (Alden et al. 1993). However, estimating rates of the prevalence of humor in advertising differ with the researcher's own definition of humor (Duncan 1979).

Humor in Advertisement: Effects and Implications

As defended by Brown and Stayman (1992), sometimes people like so much a commercial that they tend to transfer their positive feelings from the advert to the brand itself. Nevertheless, more research is required, since the investigation conducted by Berg and Lippman (2001) found no significant relationship between humor in advertising and the development of positive feelings towards the brand. However, since

this study was related with radio's commercials, visual stimuli were not presented, which can influence people's perceptions.

According to Hoyer et al. (2013), humorous advertisements stimulate buzz around them and they have the tendency to have high pass-along rates, becoming widespread. The importance of sharing videos on the internet comes with the fact that, according to the Green Room report (2013), people who find a video by themselves are 14% less likely to enjoy it than people to which it has been recommended, lowering 7% the probability of brand recall. Moreover, Cline and Kellaris (2007) claim that people will more easily recall an advert that contains strong humorous messages. However, several studies have found no significant connection between humorous advertising and memorization, such as the one conducted by Sternthal and Craig in 1973.

Regarding the message comprehension factor, some studies found a negative influence, such as Cantor and Venus (1980), whereas others reported a positive relationship, such as Weinberger and Gulas (1992). In what concerns the persuasive power of humorous commercials, previous investigations have also appeared with mixed results. Weinberger and Gulas (1992) found evidence that there is no superiority of humorous advertisement over non-humorous materials in what concerns their persuasive effect. Other researches support that evidence, such as the studies from Speck (1987) and Markiewicz (1972). On the other hand, Biel and Bridgwater (1990) believe that consumers who enjoyed a commercial were twice more able to be persuaded by it than people who felt neutral to the marketing stimuli.

Humor in advertisement can also play an important role in the social context, being able to fortify social norms and indirectly influence people's attitudes and shape their thoughts, feelings and actions. By making fun of certain behaviors, people can express implicit expected rules regarding the behaviors which are considered adequate within a

group. Hence, by teasing some sort of actions, this kind of humor can act coercively, pushing intimidatingly group members towards the inferred norms (Martin 2007).

According to some literature, humor seems to be a more operative tool for products that represent little investment and require little cognitive efforts_ so called “low-involvement products” (Spotts et al. 1997), when breeding positive feelings about the commercial is crucial to instill the consumer the desire to acquire the offering. Furthermore, the investigation of Zhang (1996) has concluded that consumers who are less motivated towards effortful cognitive activities have a lower “need for cognition”, processing the information using more heuristics and devoting little effort in elaborating thoughts. They are, therefore, more susceptible to be targeted more easily by humorous contents, given the fact that those types of contents provide them amusement and entertainment.

According to Weinberger and Campbell (1991), witticism tends to function better in radio and in television since these types of media allow for greater expressiveness than others. Additionally, some authors advocate that witticism appears to be more appropriate for certain audiences than others. For them, the male audience tends to respond more positively to it, since many commercials featuring humorous contents have an aggressive or sexual nature and men usually enjoy these types of humor more than women do (Whipple & Courtney 1981). Additionally, Cantor (1976) suggested that both genders appreciate more the humor targeting women more than humor targeting males. Tannen (1992) suggests that despite not differing in the general propensity for producing and appreciating humor, both genders use it for dissimilar social purposes (men usually want to stand out, while women intent to create intimacy).

In what concerns the younger audience, the environmental, cultural and social context in which children live significantly helps to shape their sense of humor. As their cognitive skills began to develop during childhood, children are also capable of

appreciating and comprehending more refined types of humorous materials, such as sarcasm and satiric commentaries (Martin 2007).

Furthermore, Gulas and Weinberger (2006) have created the Product Color Matrix (see Appendix 7), in an attempt to classify the offerings regarding their features and the decision making processes which are involved when purchasing them. Hence, communication's strategies should acknowledge the differences across the different types of goods presented in each cell concerning aspects beyond their hedonic value. More specifically, their theory pleads that "Yellow Goods" are believed to be the most appropriated for the use of humor in advertisement.

Fatt (2002) postulates that when the humor is linked with the offering, the commercial tends to be more effective, in comparison with the employment of non-related humor. Martin (2007) adds that witticism should be incorporated in important concepts and key words of the advertisement, and not on peripheral issues. Moreover, Shimp (2013) believes that humor serves better pre-existing products rather than new ones. Finally, according to Chattopadhyay and Basu (1989), humor appeals more to people who demonstrate already a positive attitude towards the brand (i.e. those who already purchase its products and engage in good word of mouth).

Cross-cultural Humor

Even regarding this sub-topic controversial claims appear in the existing literature. If there are investigators claiming that humor can be spread successfully worldwide due to its universal character, others exist claiming the opposite. For example, Mooji (1994) believes that humor is culturally bounded and that it can seldom become universal. Previous studies also suggest that the influences of humor on people diverge from culture to culture, depending on the humorous content of the advert and on the cultural orientation of the shopper (Lee & Lim 2008). However, according to Alford and Alford

(1981), none of the societies they examined in their researches was reported to have none humorous commercials. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that there are some cultural specificities in what concerns the appreciation of humorous materials. For example, according to a report from Millward Brown (2007), sarcasm is not commonly appreciated in China; English citizens are fans of ironic humor and in Singapore sexual humor is viewed as a taboo theme. Additionally, it appears to be numerous sorts of humor that are hardly globally expanded, such as black and blue humor, word-plays, puns and quibbles.

Problems with the employment of humor – Some disadvantages

There is a risk that comes with the use of such a powerful tool and that goes with the fact that people might pay attention only to the comedy present in the ad, ignoring the brand or the product advertised itself (Sternthal & Craig 1973). In fact, unless the humorous content of the commercial is connected with the offering, people tend to divert their attention to the funny facts, disregarding the product/brand.

Besides, marketers need to be sensitive with some matters and pay special attention to the use of some types of humor such as black humor or sarcasm. There is a great possibility that even though not their target audience, some other potential clients might feel offended. Additionally, humor that targets some particular person or celebrity can offend individuals with affinity with that target. It is crucial to pay special attention to this fact, since aggressive humor has previously made many commercials and campaigns become criticized, blackening the image of the brand. Subjects like religion, differences in gender, races and political events are susceptible to backfire (Hoang 2013). Moreover, the commercial needs to be well designed to cause the intended impact in the shopper, since there is only a tiny line separating fun from silliness.

----- Methodology -----

Data Collection

This research includes two different kinds of data: primary data and secondary data. Secondary data is pre-existing information that has already been collected by previous investigations (Saunders et al 2009). The secondary data was already presented in the literature review chapter and was obtained from a deep research which has included books, journals, published papers, websites and magazines. On the other hand, primary data has been collected in the scope of this research in order to prove or disprove the hypothesis in question. The information was collected from the on-line survey (see Appendix 11) data analysis and empirically from transcripts of the in-depth interviews, respondents' opinions and documented observation.

Research methodology

Intending to have an exhaustive understanding of the consumers' minds, the methodologies comprehended in this investigation had both quantitative and qualitative nature. By resorting to a multiple method research, the information displayed in quantitative investigations can be enhanced by qualitative data (Proctor 2005), giving to the research further validity and robustness.

Qualitative Research

In-depth interviews were performed in order to scrutinize and observe the attitudes, feelings, thoughts, opinions and motivational aspects of the consumers. By being exposed to the stimulus and afterwards immediately analyzed their behavior, this method was able to explore the complexity of their responses and perceptions. Twenty five interviews were conducted face-to-face and three television commercials with different humorous appeals were shown. Afterwards, the respondents were guided by the interviewer to give their opinion and share their thoughts and concerns, answering to several questions previously defined in a script (in Appendix 10). The interviewer

initiated and drove the flow of the dialogue, guaranteeing that it would revolve around the topic and encouraging the respondent to be open and share his/her perspective. The three commercials chosen to integrate this research were cautiously chosen, respecting the selection criteria. After an exhaustive examination of many television advertisements in websites such as veryfunnyads.com and youtube.com, the three selected videos were perceived by the investigator to be the most suited ones to be used as instruments in this study as they:

- Featured brands/products that could be acquired in the Portuguese market
- Used Portuguese language or could be understood even if the respondent did not speak other languages
- Included humorous appeals
- Were presented in Youtube.com with one of the following keywords: “Very Funny Ad”; “Funny Commercial”; “Best Commercials”

In order to avoid biases related with the duration of each video, the three commercials were also chosen due to their similar time of length, which is approximately half minute each. The two commercials which were rated as being the funniest of the three in the interviews were subsequently used in the online survey: the Heineken's commercial and the Nestlé's commercial (with average scores of $M=8.3$ and $M=7.7$ respectively in a scale of 0 to 10).

Furthermore, three interviews via e-mail with television advertisers and marketers were performed (Cristina Almeida: Director of Audiovisual Production “Leo Burnett” & “Publicis”; Steve Colmar: Creative Director of “Leo Burnett”; and Pedro Ribeiro: Creative Director of “Publicis”), in order to grasp their personal opinions regarding the use of humorous contents in television spots and intending to combine as many perspectives of the matter in this investigation as possible, leveraging its accuracy and validity.

Quantitative Research

This type of study is statistically oriented. It has involved the construction and administration of an online survey which can be seen in the Appendix. The survey was designed to answer the main questions of this report, trying to understand the correlation between the variables and testing the hypothesis previously presented. It kept the language simple and easy to understand by the respondents, not using any specific concept or word that required some knowledge in this field. Besides, it meant to go straight to the point, gathering as much valuable data as possible. It has also been made an effort to carefully design the survey in a way that it was simply and quickly answered by the respondents, guaranteeing that they would not get bored (as they had to watch commercials) or gave up the survey, answering honestly and firmly to the questions. Moreover, it was constituted by several questions going from multiple choice questions to dichotomous ones. According to Churchill and Brown (2009), questions featuring scales encourage respondents to balance the intensity degree of their feelings. Since this research aims at targeting Portuguese consumers, the questionnaire was developed and spread in Portuguese language.

It comprised the two advertisements that were rated in the qualitative research as being the two most humorous ones. After answering to some questions related with their demographic information and consumption practices, the 360 respondents that participated in the survey were asked to watch the commercials and assess their perceptions and opinions. Subsequently, the data was statistically analyzed using a Spreadsheet from *Microsoft Excel 2010* and *IBM SPSS Statistics 20* program.

Measurement and Analysis of the Variables

Besides exploring consumers' demographic factors and consumption habits, the questions used in both research methods aimed to understand respondents' emotions

and reactions to the advertisements shown. The following table provides a general overview of the questions asked both in qualitative and quantitative methods and bibliographical references from where measurement scales have been retrieved.

VARIABLE IN RESEARCH	RESEARCH METHOD	MEASUREMENT QUESTIONS	REFERENCES
Humorous Stimuli	Qualitative	Did you find this commercial boring, funny, offensive...?	
	Quantitative	How did you perceive the advertisement?	Zhang (1996) humor scale organized by five bi-polar items
		Please choose two adjectives you find adequate for this commercial	Mitchell and Olson (1981) items based adjectives
Persuasion and intention to purchase	Qualitative	Are you likely to purchase the offering advertised?	Elbers (2013)
	Quantitative	If searching for this kind of product, how likely are you to purchase this brand's product based solely on this commercial?	Measurement scale using three sentences proposed by Baker and Churchill (1977)
Intention to share and diffuse the advert on social networks	Qualitative	After watching funny commercials do you feel the need to share them with family or friends?	Hoang (2013)
	Quantitative	After watching this video, do you feel like sharing it with family/friends?	
Message Comprehension	Qualitative	Did you understand the advertisement? What is it about? What do you consider to be the main message?	Hoang (2013)
	Quantitative	How do you characterize the commercial's message?	Hoang (2013)
Product liking and development of positive feelings towards the brand	Qualitative	Are you familiar with the brand? Do you have a positive image regarding it? Did this commercial change it?	Hoang (2013)
	Quantitative	I previously had a positive image regarding the brand; After watching this commercial the image I had of the brand has improved	Elbers (2013)
Brand credibility	Qualitative	Do you believe humor is likely to negatively affect brand credibility?	Hoang (2013)
	Quantitative	I already knew the brand advertised; I believe this brand is credible and reliable; This commercial improved the credibility of the brand	Elbers (2013)
Differences in gender	Multiple Method	Results Analysis using an Independent-Sample t-test	

Table 1. Measurement questions for each variable and respective references

----- Results & Findings -----

The demographical information of the participants (such as age, gender and level of education distributions) in both methods used in this research can be consulted in detail in the Appendix 12 and 13. Through the analysis of the remainder gathered data, it is possible to construe many relevant findings in the scope of this investigation. They

resulted from a thorough, meticulous and intensive scrutinization of the respondent's answers in both quantitative and qualitative research.

Through the analysis of the survey output, it has been possible to understand in detail consumers' habits and purchasing patterns that are valuable in the scope of this research. The largest amount of people (about 35% of the respondents) usually collects information about their purchases through on-line searches, leaving any kind of advertisement with only 17%. This appears to be important information for marketers, once internet is increasingly becoming a truly relevant mean of communication nowadays, influencing people in their shopping decisions while leaving television commercials behind. Nevertheless, 42% of the respondents claimed to watch television commercials sometimes, while 22% admitted to watch them very frequently, which is still a big portion of the sample population. Remarkably, 70% of the respondents mentioned humorous commercials as their preferred kind of advertisement, while 15% has chosen emotional ones, featuring a beautiful story. This data clearly shows a strong consumers' preference for television commercials that employ any kind of emotion (in particular humor), demonstrating the power of emotions in the world of advertisement and its easiness to reach and impact a substantial part of the audience. Moreover, only 7% of the respondents have chosen the option "Just like me" when the question asked was "Advertisements are appealing to me" but, impressively, this rate was up to 40% when the question was "I like funny advertisements".

Through the on-line survey data was also collected concerning the characteristics of people's shopping behaviors. The main finding is that the majority of people dedicate time to evaluate cautiously on what to spend their money, being fans of promotions and discounts (94% of them claimed to love them), not shopping by impulse (about 61% of the respondents), making complex evaluations and collecting as much information as possible before buying (nearly 52% of them).

The independent variable in this investigation is the humorous content in each video, which has been measured using the five items scale proposed by Zhang (1996). Its reliability has found to be remarkable, with a Cronbach's alpha of about 0.9.

	Heineken's Commercial	Nestlé's Commercial
Humor Rate (mean)	4.3194	3.9733
Standard Deviation	.7287	.9861
Maximum	5	5
Minimum	1	1
Cronbach's Alpha (reliability of the scale used)	.9045	.9518

Table 2. Humor rate for each commercial in the on-line survey (values based on the means of the respondent's answers)

The Heineken commercial was perceived as being the funniest one, with a mean score of $M = 4.3$ in a scale of 1 to 5. Looking at the adjectives people used to classify both commercials we can find evidence to support that as well: in both commercials the most common adjectives have been “funny” and “creative”. However, in the Nestlé's commercial, words such as “absurd”, “not enjoyable” or “bad” gain more expression:



Figure 1. Adjectives word cloud for Heineken's commercial



Figure 2. Adjectives word cloud for Nestlé's commercial

In-depth interviews provided relevant information regarding the variable “Persuasion and Intention to Purchase”, which also contributed to a better design of the subsequent on-line survey. Due to time constraints and in order to explore people's attitudes and opinions without transforming the research method in a boring procedure and tedious experience for the respondents, only three humorous commercials were displayed in the interviews. Even though the advertisements were carefully selected

using the criteria already explained above, one of the commercials presented a brand of beers. Hence, some of the women interviewed mentioned that they did not really feel the target of a beer commercial, despite admitting consuming beers occasionally. Moreover, many of the respondents (both male and women) stated that they don't feel motivated to buy Pepsi's drinks due to the previous Pepsi's Ronaldo's voodoo doll campaign, which has deeply stained Pepsi brand's image. From this claims, it is very clear that there are many factors influencing people's purchases, rather than just how humorous the commercial is perceived. Nevertheless, people mentioned as well that if the joke work is well constructed and designed, the chances that people remember the commercial and develop positive feelings towards the brand are very likely to increase and that might ultimately end up in a boost in company's sales. Therefore, people were asked in the on-line survey to evaluate their feelings towards the three sentences that measured the intention to purchase variable bearing in mind that they should consider only the commercial seen and imagining themselves in a searching for that type of good situation. Through the analysis of the survey output, results were found to support the null hypothesis, once as funnier the advertised is perceived, the more persuasive it becomes ($r = .463, p < .01$). Hence, witticism can be regarded as an indirect reason for purchasing a product. If the commercial employs amusing elements and conveys enjoyable messages, it might be indirect evidence that the offering will provide an amusing experience as well. Thus, the people interviewed mentioned that they are susceptible of associating the positive character of the advert with the positive experiences they might have if they buy the offering.

Perceived by the respondents of the qualitative research to be one of the main advantages of humorous advertisement, it is clear by the analysis of the collected data from both research methods that the intention to share a funny advert is positively correlated with the level of comicality perceived by the viewer ($r = .54, p < .01$). People

also mentioned that they feel good when sharing with others something they found to be interesting or funny, not only because it is a way to amuse them, but also because by doing so, they are showing to others that they are more sociable and enjoyable individuals. According to the output of the on-line survey, only 16% of the respondents have never shared a video/commercial with friends or family, while 87% of them stated to have already received one, which clearly demonstrates an increasing trend to diffuse advertisement campaigns in social media. The most common means used to share witty adverts according to the interviewees are: e-mail and social networks such as Facebook or YouTube. This greatly benefits brands, once they can freely expose a larger number of people to their marketing stimuli and raise the notoriety of the brand, while generating buzz around their offerings. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected, meaning that as funnier an advert is perceived, the biggest the chances it would be diffused.

In what concerns the impact of humorous commercials on brand credibility, respondents of the in-depth interviews had no doubt that it is possible to damage the credibility of the brand if, in its message, is conveyed some kind of discrimination as it was the case of Pepsi with its commercial which targeted with voodoo Cristiano Ronaldo. Moreover, if it makes fun out of beliefs, values, religion, national symbols, injures susceptibilities of any kind, plays with stereotypes, sexual themes, or touches upon sensitive issues capable of generating controversy, it is almost certain that the commercial will end up damaging the credibility of the brand. Even if the product has high standards of quality, consumers will be very judgmental and critical towards the way it is advertised. Nevertheless, survey results have shown that there is a statistically significant positive correlation, even with small effects, between humor perception and the credibility of the brand ($r = .43, p < .01$), meaning that the funnier people perceive an advert, the more credible they think the brand is. Hence, the null hypothesis should

not be rejected. Moreover, from the people who claimed that Heineken is not a reliable brand, 57% of them felt that the commercial improved the credibility of the brand. This rate lowers to 46% vis-à-vis Nestlé's commercial.

Interviewees also agreed that the messages featuring in the commercials shown were easy to understand and all of them were capable of explaining what they thought about the content of each commercial seen. Besides, they also mentioned that generally speaking, humor does not negatively influence audience's understanding of the joke work, unless the humor is too difficult to construe or people have to make a big cognitive effort to grasp the funny side of it. Moreover, they even added that humor might be an easier path to convey advertising messages, since it amuses and distracts people, making them want to be exposed to the marketing stimulus. Additionally, 74% of the survey respondents believed that Heineken's commercial's message was very easy to understand, claiming to have perfectly understood it. As for the Nestlé's commercial, this rate lowers to 47%, meaning that there is a correlation with large effects ($r = .58, p < .01$) between humor perception and message comprehension. Hence, the more people enjoy the joke work, the biggest the chances of effective marketing communication, meaning that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Regarding the product liking and development of positive feelings towards the brand variable in research, during the in-depth interviews the majority of the people agreed with the fact that humorous advertisement is able to develop affection towards one brand, if the viewer really liked the joke work and became fascinated by it.

Data collected by the survey demonstrated that the perception of humor is weakly correlated with the brand/product image ($r = .44, p < .01$), which means that the respondents who rated the commercial's comicality with higher scores were also the ones who claimed to feel stronger positive impacts in their image of the product/brand.

From the people who stated not to have a positive image towards Heineken, 40% of

them mentioned not to feel any improvement regarding it. In what concerns Nestlé, only 4% of the respondents claimed not to have a positive image of this brand and, among them, an impressive rate of 93% of them admitted that it did not change through the visualization of the commercial. However, these were also the ones who have rated the humorous contents of both advertisements with lower scores ($M= 2.5_$ in a scale of 1 to 5_ and $SD=1.09$). Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected and adverts comprising humor are effectively able to positively shape the brand image.

Finally, it was surprising to observe that the female audience responded more positively to the set of humorous commercials shown in the in-depth interviews, having rating them with higher scores of comicality, which contrasts with the affirmations of Whipple and Courtney (1981) who stated that funny commercials are more successful near the male audience. This might be explained by the fact that women tend to be more emotional and, therefore, more susceptible to be targeted by commercials employing any kind of emotion, such as humor. However, survey results clearly demonstrated that men appreciated most the Heineken commercial, having rating it with higher scores of humorous content. It might be due to the fact that men felt they were the target population of a beer advert, a good typically consumed by the male audience. An independent-samples t-test was run using *IBM SPSS Statistics 20* in order to compare humor perceptions across genders. There was not found a significant difference in the score for males ($M=4.08$, $SD= .971$) and females ($M=4.18$, $SD= .901$); $t(718) = 1.239$; $p= .216$. These results support the null hypothesis and, hence, it is not rejected, meaning that humor perceptions across genders are not significantly different. Moreover, it is also interesting to mention that the gender which rated the humorous content of each video with higher scores was also the one which claimed to have understood better its message.

When the topic revolved around the main advantages of humorous commercials in the opinions of the interviewees, the general consensus was that humorous advertisement is easier to remember and recall and that effect can last for a very long period of time. This memorization effect is due to the emotional impact it creates on the people. Besides, it contributes vastly to the daily well-being and happiness of the consumers, since it amuses and entertains them. Moreover, people also mentioned that it might have a superior power to become viral when compared to rational advertising. Furthermore, beyond attracting easily the audiences, the unconscious mental association people do to the cheerfulness of the advertisement and the product itself is susceptible to benefit the brand, which corroborates the findings in quantitative method.

The topic concerning the possible existence of “eternal humor”_was the one which has generated the biggest controversy during interviews. If in one hand people say that there are many jokes that trespass generations (if not correlated with momentary facts), on the other hand, people also mention that humor is time bounded and jokes can be worn. For humor to be eternal, it needs to focus timeless subjects, such as eternal habits and problems. Moreover, advertisers need to bring creativity and innovation to advertisement. If one commercial is constantly being repeated, it ends up boring people, losing its impact and purpose. Hence, one possible way to circumvent this problem is to stop broadcasting the commercial for some time and then restart broadcasting it again after a while. It will amuse new audiences who were not familiar with it and please the memories of the ones who already knew it. However, it is always necessary to introduce some elements of novelty, in order to avoid the feeling of “déjà vu”.

When asked about the possibility of existence of “global humor”, people were quite consensual in saying that culture deeply influences our perception of humor. For example, wordplays are usually culturally bounded because of the language and the Heineken commercial might not be well accepted in an Islamic country, where people

usually don't drink alcohol. One particular respondent mentioned that the only way humor can become global is if it touches in aspects which are common to the humanity regardless the county in which we are in. However, globalization is playing a remarkable and truly important role in the way things are perceived abroad. The fact that the mobility of the people across the globe is increasingly facilitated and massive is able to shape the mentalities and mindsets of those places. Hence, nowadays humor is more able to travel well than it would a few years ago and the marketing strategy needs to be adapted locally, since a standard marketing-mix does not consider the importance of the cultural variable (traditions, values and beliefs of each place) when penetrating into new markets.

When asked about the suitability of humor to all products, respondents were assertive in saying that there are some categories of goods that are not well suited for its use, due to product's characteristics or the message intended to convey. They have mentioned that there are some categories in which is required another emotion rather than humor. When talking about elucidative campaigns focusing topics such as cancer or AIDS, it is very risky to use witticism. Or if doing so, one should use it in a very clever and sensitive way.

When asked about the possibility of humor masking some negative features of the products by overlapping them, almost all of the respondents agreed that consumers are usually less critical towards the offering if they are relaxed by an atmosphere full of fun, contaminated by positive feelings and excited by their successful understanding of the joke work. They mentioned that by amusing people and diverting their attention, the brand is able to create in consumers' minds the thought that the product or the brand itself is more appealing than it really is, neutralizing the possible negative features of the offering. For example, the McDonalds' commercials promoting the "Happy Meal" which use animated figures might make people forget during some moments of the low

nutritional values of the products. Hence, witticism might be one of the best “masks” in advertisement for the negative impact of one brand in the economy, environment or even on people's health.

During social and economic crises such as the one Portugal is currently facing, humor arises as well as a resource with public value, lightening the mood of the population and relieving people from daily troubles. Moreover, in today's world, the success of a campaign is not only measured by the level of sales it creates. The intention can often just be to receive a “like” on Facebook, an award on festivals, to spread the advert on the internet, or merely a registration on some service.

As recommendations to advertisers, interviewees stated that humorous commercials that exploit people's cognitive and mental skills should be carefully structured. If nobody is able to comprehend and appreciate it, the advert misses its objective. Moreover, there should be a concordant connection between audio and visual elements presented in the commercial. For example, if the type of humor used is surprise, startling background music could help enhancing the advert's effectiveness. And when humorous messages rely on surprising moments, marketers should ensure that the commercial is not too foreseeable and that it will not be ran for too long on TV. Otherwise, the commercial could lose its essence by breaking down its surprise effect. Some respondents have also mentioned during the interviews that elements present in advertising that are able to capture people's attention may enhance further the role of humor, when allied to it. Elements such as sex, jingles, the use of celebrities, friendly and beautiful faces, pleasant voices or music etc. ..., are able to boost the effectiveness and persuasiveness of a humorous commercial. Moreover, memorization process can also be eased by the use of humorous slogans that people tend to repeat in their daily lives. Those sentences can be used for a long time as ordinary expressions, prompting the probabilities of greater brand association and recognition.

----- Conclusion & Final Considerations -----

Humor is used every day across the world as a communication tool. Besides contributing to people's mental health and better quality of life, it also improves cognitive skills and social interactions. In a world where costumers basically shop for amusement, pleasure and satisfaction, keeping them entertained and distracted is fundamental and can be achieved by plugging adverts with humor. But it is important to bear in mind that the effectiveness of humor is truthfully difficult to estimate and the life of a joke might turn out to be plaguy ephemeral. What is funny to one generation might not be to other as humorous contents can change as the world revolves, as cultures change, as people grow old, as mentalities and behaviors are shaped.

Witticism is not an enchanted powder that ensures effective advertising, but, according to the advertisers interviewed, it is possible for any brand to opt for a humorous communication strategy even with budget constraints. Hence, the effectiveness of humorous advertisement profoundly depends on the goals it aims to achieve, the features and category of the product advertised, the characteristics of the target audience, the communication mean used and the typology of humor employed and all of these are important elements that the marketer should consider when creating a marketing campaign. Nevertheless, this investigation has concluded that there are positive relationships between humor perception and the variables in research, such as: intention to purchase, message comprehension, intention to share, product liking and development of positive feelings towards the brand and brand credibility, meaning that the clever use of this emotional marketing tool is able to generate successful advertisement and easily and faster create a bridge between marketers and consumers.

I believe that this paper has successfully met its purposes, answering in a clear, objective and insightful way to the research questions. Other researchers claim that the

scientific study of comicality is not a really amusing topic in itself. McComas (1923) believes that researches approaching humor through the lens of science will find it no laughable subject. However, it has been fun in many ways to me, as I really enjoyed this intriguing and interesting theme and as I was reading the materials, more and more ideas came to my mind and, making the scientific investigation experience pleasurable and challenging and, in the end, even more rewarding to me.

----- Limitations of the Study and Future Research -----

The effectiveness and even the definition of humor are guileful given their complex character. It can be affected by multiple factors, making it a truly hard topic to study. Besides, other strategic selling elements beyond humor might be present in the advertisements used to conduct this study, which can bias consumers' perceptions.

Time constraints constituted one of the limitations of this research. If more time was available, a biggest sample of respondents could have participated in this study and many more interviews could have been performed, using additional television commercials, increasing the reliability of the results found. Although collecting the primary data was a very time consuming task, it provided very useful and enriching information. However, it relied very much on the willingness, enthusiasm and proficiency of the respondents. Humor's positive communication effects might be developed only under conditions which are challenging to reproduce in experimental situations, since they could entail a relaxed and unconstrained atmosphere and perhaps several exposures. Sometimes, the effectiveness of humor needs to take a while to determine, since its effects and impacts might not be seen right away and processing the ad occurs often non-consciously. The advertisements can "plant the seed" that needs time to grow and finally impulse people towards purchasing.

By conducting face-to-face interviews instead of focus group meetings, group pressure was eliminated and the respondents were able to freely and comfortably express their feelings and reveal more relevant information. Nevertheless, one could repeat the experiment trying to use focus group meetings instead and check the consistency or volatility of the findings. Moreover, by using a previously defined script with the questions, it was ensured that all of the interviews followed the same structural framework and by using the voice recorder, the minimum of information was lost or misunderstood. Nevertheless, personal biases might as well constitute a limitation of this research, since the interpretation of the interviewees' answers was based on an empirical evaluation. Additionally, once the target population of this investigation is constituted by Portuguese consumers, it has made totally sense to run the online survey and held the interviews in Portuguese. Conversely, the translations performed to English might restrain the accuracy of the investigation.

There are as well other types of humor not contemplated in this paper and further research is required, using, for example, advertisement in other means of communication rather than just television. Differences in humor perceptions between age groups, and nationalities/cultures could also constitute other topics of research. Moreover, since people often get annoyed by the amount of advertisement's stimuli they get during only one television break, another interesting research could focus the ideal time of commercials' duration. Finally, new researches could try to focus only in one particular brand, trying to analyze the evolution and effectiveness of its advertising campaigns, when using humorous marketing approaches.

Concluding, humor shows up as being a fertile field for future researches, where the combination of several studies can provide a much more solid and concrete understanding of the matter.

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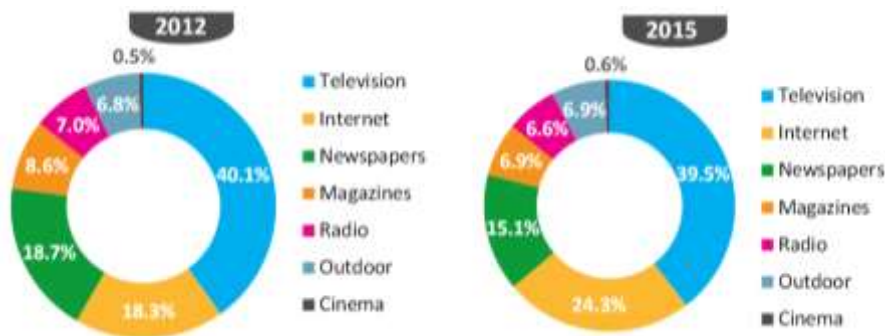
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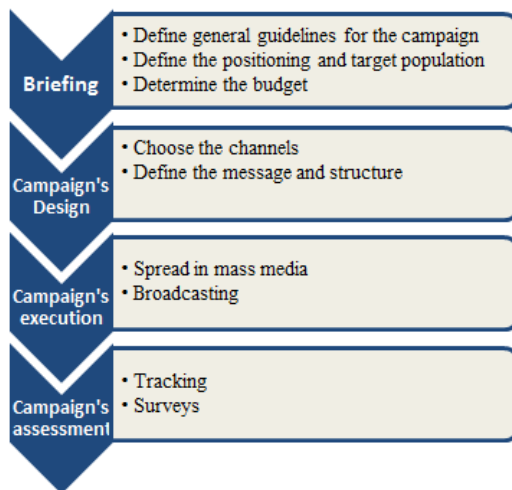
----- Appendix -----

1. Share of Global Ad Spend by Medium (%)



Retrieved from: Zenith Optimedia Report 2013

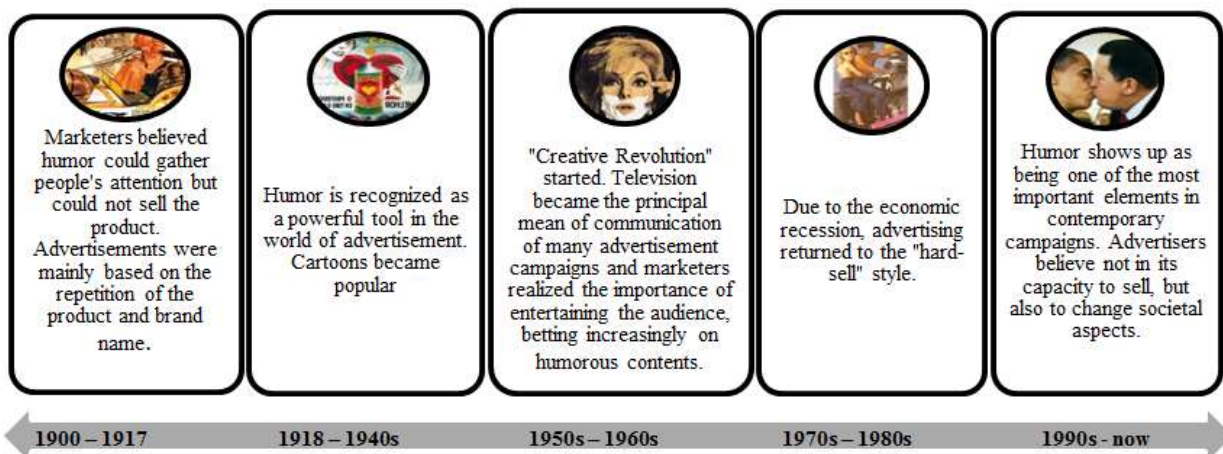
2. Main Stages of an Advertisement Campaign



Adapted from: "Steps in designing an advertisement campaign";
Retrieved from www.estgv.ipv.pt

3. Brief History of the Use of Humor in Advertisement

To Beard (2008), there are five main periods, represented schematically below, to keep in mind in the history of humorous advertisement.



4. Humor - Three Major Theoretical Schools

The revision of the available literature stresses three major theories which try to explain the response to a humorous stimulus: the **Incongruity** theory, the **Relief** theory and the **Superiority** theory. They do not appear as mutually exclusive models, but they can be interpreted as different inks for the same painting. However, many academics argue that these theories offer incomplete elucidations of humorous reactions. The truth is that due to the multi-dimensional character of humor, a unified theory of humor is truthfully difficult to construct. The following table provides a general overview:

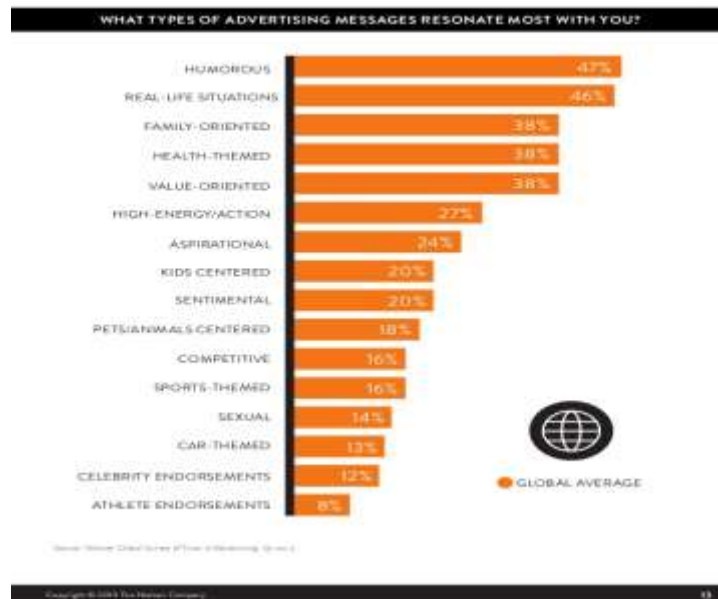
Theory	Some Theorizers	Observations
Incongruity theory	Kant (1790) Priestley (1777)	Suls (1983) considers incongruity to be essential for the construction of humor. In this theory, witticism results from the break in expectations. People understand the joke when the cognitive dissonances are solved.
Relief theory	Speck (1987) Freud (1990)	To Freud, the purpose of humor is to release pressures and strains and relieve physic or psychological tensions.
Superiority theory	Hobbes (1651)	Is the most ancient theory, with routes that date back to Aristotle. To Hobbes, we laugh because we realize that we are superior to others, making fun of them. Humor is a mechanism of derision, subjugation and affirmation.

5. Types of Humor

TYPE OF HUMOR	DESCRIPTION
Comparison	Placing two or more components together in order to create humorous contents.
Personification	Assigning human characteristics to animals or inanimate things
Exaggeration	Overstating, fussing and magnifying hyperbolically and disproportionately some sentence or situation
Pun	Wordplay, clinch, double entendres or a quibble. It comes with using the language to generate new humorous meanings
Sarcasm	Satiric or ironic witticism. It often involves saying the opposite of the intended
Surprise	Involves improbable or unexpected situations. The essential ingredient for this type of humor is incongruity
Silliness	Ridiculous, foolish, bizarre and laughable situations or sentences
Black Humor	Disregarding the serious strand of social subjects such as diseases, death, or morality and approaching them friskily
Blue Humor	Is also known as dirty humor and may include swearing, foul language or sexual contents. It is seldom used in advertisement in order to keep it appropriate for all ages

Moreover, according to Kelly and Solomon (1975), humor can also be classified into three categories: **Audio Humor** (if it can be understood without vision), **Visual Humor** (if it can be perceived without audition) and **Audio-Visual Humor** (if it needs both senses to be understood).

6. “What type of advertising messages resonate most with you?” from Nielsen Global Survey of Trust Advertising Q1 2013



7. The Product Color Matrix (Adapted from Gulas & Weinberger 2006, page 77)



8. Most Popular YouTube Channels (Adapted from Green Room – Comedy Creates Cash Flow; 2013, page 6)

Rank	Name	Subscribers	Category
1	Smosh	10,067,871	Comedy
2	Jenna Marbles	9,012,189	Comedy
3	Ray William Johnson	8,884,234	Comedy
4	Nigahiga	8,433,456	Comedy
5	Rihanna VEVO	8,345,360	Music
6	PewDiePie	8,096,306	Comedy (Video Game Review)
7	Machinima	7,782,283	Animation
8	Hola Soy German	7,246,051	Comedy (Spanish)
9	Movies	6,847,798	Movies
10	One Direction VEVO	6,635,551	Music

9. Advertisements used in this research

Heineken Commercial – Walk in the fridge - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIutgtzwhAc>

Released in December 2008

Awards: Eurobest 2009 Tv/Cinema Alcoholic Drinks Silver
Cannes Lions 2009 Film Silver
Epica Awards 2009 Film Alcoholic Drinks Gold
Dutch award for best advertisement of the year 2009: Gouden Loekie.



Pepsi Commercial – Chinese Monks - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40DykbPa4Lc>

Released in January 2002

Awards: Winner of FAB Awards 2003 - Non-Alcoholic Drinks
Winner of Epica Awards 2002 - Non-Alcoholic Drinks



Nestlé Commercial - Sharing - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E8c5lYaO04>

Released in September 2002

Awards: None found



10. In-depth interviews Script

The Role of Humor in Television Advertisement – A study regarding Portuguese Consumers' emotions and reactions

Please watch the following videos:



- Did you understand the advertisement? What is it about? What do you consider to be the main message?
- Did you find the commercial boring; funny; offensive (etc...)?
- Are you likely to try or to purchase the offering advertised?
- Are you familiar with the brand? Do you have a positive image regarding it? Did this commercial change it?
- Do you believe humor is likely to negatively affect brand credibility?
- After watching funny commercials do you feel the need to share them with friends/family?
- Do you think that humor is able to mask some negative features of the product by overlapping them?
- Do you think that humorous advertisement provides any kind of advantage when compared to non-humorous one?
- Do you believe that there is eternal humor, or after some time the joke is worn?
- Do you consider that there is global humor or is it culturally bounded?

Please rate the videos seen:

	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Surely
I found the Heineken commercial FUNNY											
I found the Pepsi commercial FUNNY											
I found the Nestlé commercial FUNNY											

- Gender: F ☐ M ☐
- Age: -10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61+ ☐

11. Survey Script

The Role of Humor in Television Advertisement – A study regarding Portuguese Consumers' emotions and reactions

Dear respondent,

I am a student from Nova School of Business and Economics and as an instrument for my Master Thesis regarding the "Role of Humor in Advertising" I request your cooperation by completing this survey.

Despite all information is strictly confidential and not personally identifiable, I hope you could answer the questions honestly. There is no right or wrong answers and I am only interested in your personal opinion.

The questionnaire was designed to be answered in a simple, quick and fun way, taking less than 10 minutes.

Thank you for your participation!

- Gender: F ☐ M ☐
- Age: -10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61+ ☐
- Educational Level
 - Primary School ☐
 - High School Diploma ☐
 - Bachelor's degree ☐
 - Master's degree ☐
 - PhD ☐
- Which television commercials do you prefer to watch? (Choose only one)
 - Emotional ones, with a beautiful story ☐
 - Humorous ones, which make me laugh ☐
 - The ones using celebrities I admire ☐
 - The ones featuring the brands I like ☐
- How do you usually collect information about your purchases? (choose only one)
 - Recommendations (friends, family) ☐
 - Product Trial (personal experiences) ☐
 - Internet searches ☐
 - Advertisements (radio; Television, Magazines, etc...) ☐
- Do you usually watch television commercials?
 - Never, I always change the channel ☐
 - Almost Never ☐
 - Sometimes ☐
 - Very frequently ☐
 - Always, I never change the channel ☐

- Have you ever shared a video/ commercial found on the internet with your friends/family?

Yes, I use to do that ☐

Yes, but it is rare ☐

No, never ☐

- Have you ever received a shared video/commercial?

Yes ☐

No ☐

- Please choose the option that resonates the most with you:

	Not like me at all (1)	Not much like me (2)	Somewhat like me (3)	A lot like me (4)	Just like me (5)
Advertisements are appealing to me					
I like funny advertisements					
I like promotions, discounts and coupons					
I usually shop by impulse					
I usually don't have much time to shop					
I make complex evaluations before buying					
I often collect as much information as possible before shopping					

- Please watch the following video:



- How do you characterize the commercial's message?

Very badly, the message is difficult to understand ☐

Badly ☐

Average ☐

Well ☐

Very well, the message is easy to understand ☐

- How did you perceive the advertisement?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not funny at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Funny
Not humorous at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Humorous
Not playful at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Playful
Not amusing at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Amusing
Not dull at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Dull

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- Please choose two adjectives you find adequate for this commercial:
Bad; Good; Unlikeable; Likeable; Not irritating; Irritating; Funny; Not funny; Not enjoyable; Enjoyable;
Negative; Positive; Tasteless; Tasteful; Awful; Nice; Not effective; Effective; Not eye-catching; Eye-catching;
Creative; Not creative; Absurd; Well-designed; Interesting
- If searching for beers, how likely are you to purchase Heineken based solely on this commercial?

	Definitely not (1)	Not likely (2)	Undecided (3)	Most likely (4)	Definitely will (5)
I would like to try it					
I would buy it					
I would seek for more information					

- After watching this video, do you feel like sharing it with your friend/family?

1 Definitely not ☐2 Not likely ☐3 Undecided ☐4 Most likely ☐5 Definitely will ☐

- After watching this video, where do you stand regarding the following sentences?

	Definitely not (1)	Not likely (2)	Undecided (3)	Very likely (4)	Definitely yes (5)
I already knew the brand advertised					
I believe this brand is reliable and credible					
This commercial improved the credibility of the brand					
I previously had a positive image regarding the brand					
After watching this commercial the image I had of the brand has improved					

- Please watch the following video:



- How well did the advertisement describe the product?

Very badly, the message is difficult to understand ☐Badly ☐Average ☐Well ☐Very well, the message is easy to understand ☐

- How did you perceive the advertisement?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not funny at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Funny
Not humorous at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Humorous
Not playful at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Playful
Not amusing at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Amusing
Not dull at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Dull

- Please choose two adjectives you find adequate for this commercial:
Bad; Good; Unlikeable; Likeable; Not irritating; Irritating; Fun to watch; Not fun to watch; Not enjoyable; Enjoyable; Negative; Positive; Tasteless; Tasteful; Awful; Nice; Not effective; Effective; Not eye-catching; Eye-catching; Creative; Not creative; Absurd; Well-designed
- If searching for chocolates, how likely are you to purchase Nestlé based solely on this commercial?

	Definitely not (1)	Not likely (2)	Undecided (3)	Most likely (4)	Definitely will (5)
I would like to try it					
I would buy it					
I would seek for more information					

- After watching this video, do you feel like sharing it with your friend/family?
 - 1 Definitely not ☐
 - 2 Not likely ☐
 - 3 Undecided ☐
 - 4 Most likely ☐
 - 5 Definitely will ☐

- After watching this video, where do you stand regarding the following sentences?

	Definitely not (1)	Not likely (2)	Undecided (3)	Very likely (4)	Definitely yes (5)
I already knew the brand advertised					
I believe this brand is reliable and credible					
This commercial improved the credibility of the brand					
I previously had a positive image regarding the brand					
After watching this commercial the image I had of the brand has improved					

12. Respondents' Age

Quantitative Method [On-line Survey]

	n_i	f_i	Mean	Std. Deviation
0 - 10	0	0%	28.8194	11.2628
11-20	37	10%	$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum (x_i n_i)}{n}$ <p>When each class is represented by: $[L_i ; L_i]$ and $x_i = \frac{L_i + L_i}{2}$</p>	$\sigma^2 = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n (x_j - \bar{x})^2}{n-1}$
21-30	246	68%		
31-40	34	10%		
41-50	24	7%		
51-60	12	3%		
61 - 100	7	2%		
TOTAL	360	100%		

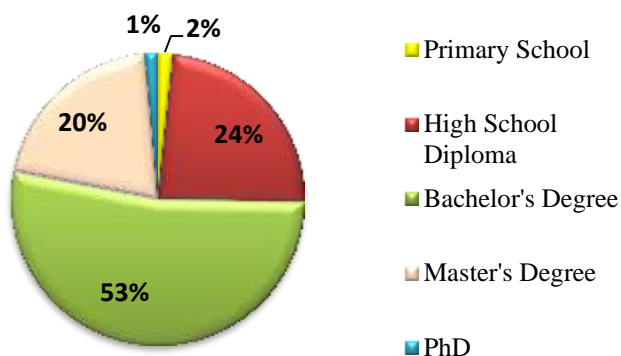
Qualitative Method [In-depth interviews]

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	25	21	64	27.88	11.8906

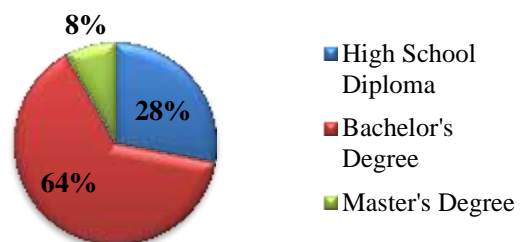
13. Respondents' Gender and Data Collected

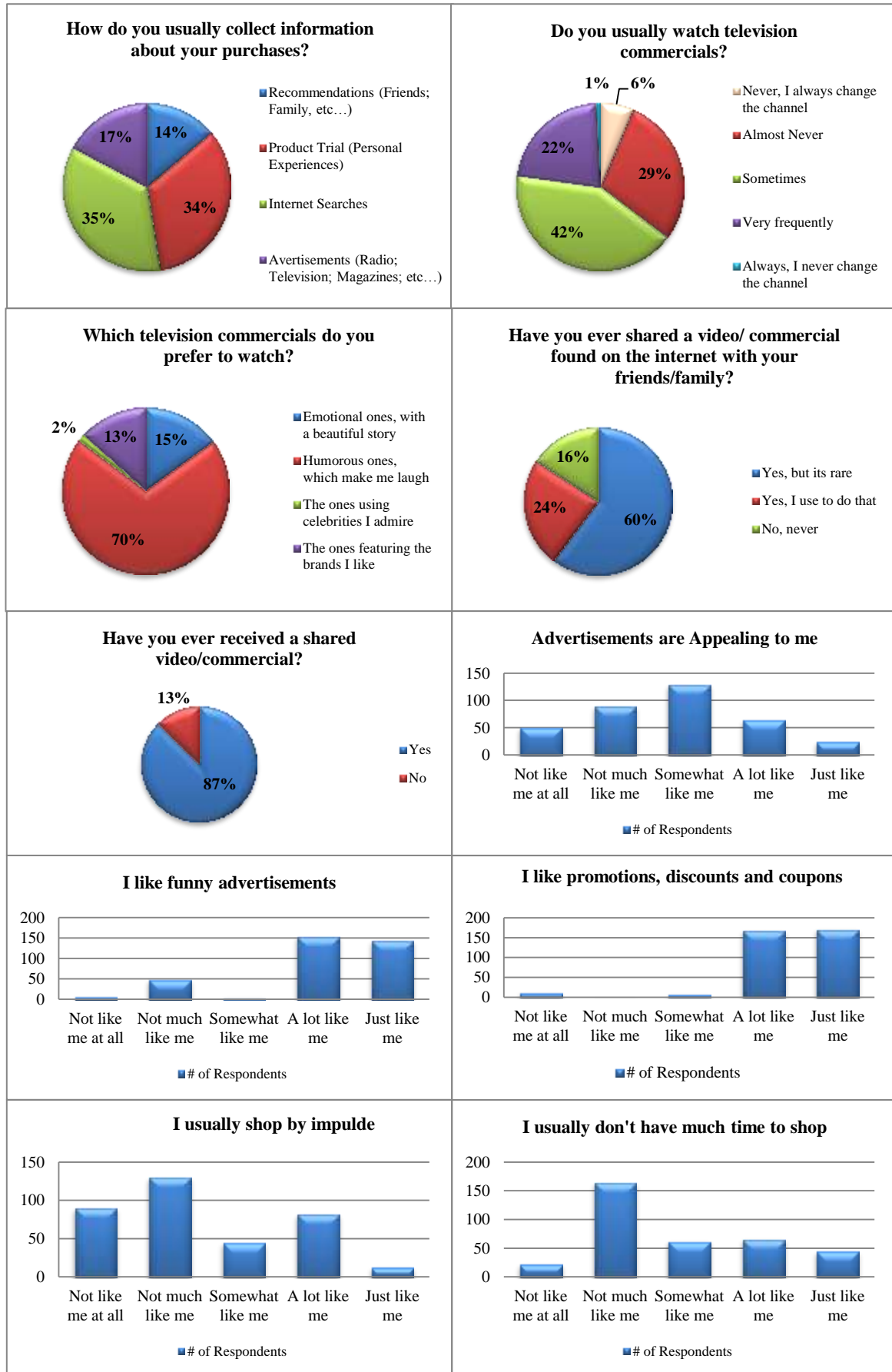
	Quantitative Method		Qualitative Method	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
n_i	251	109	13	12
f_i	69.7222%	30.2778%	52%	48%
Total	360		25	

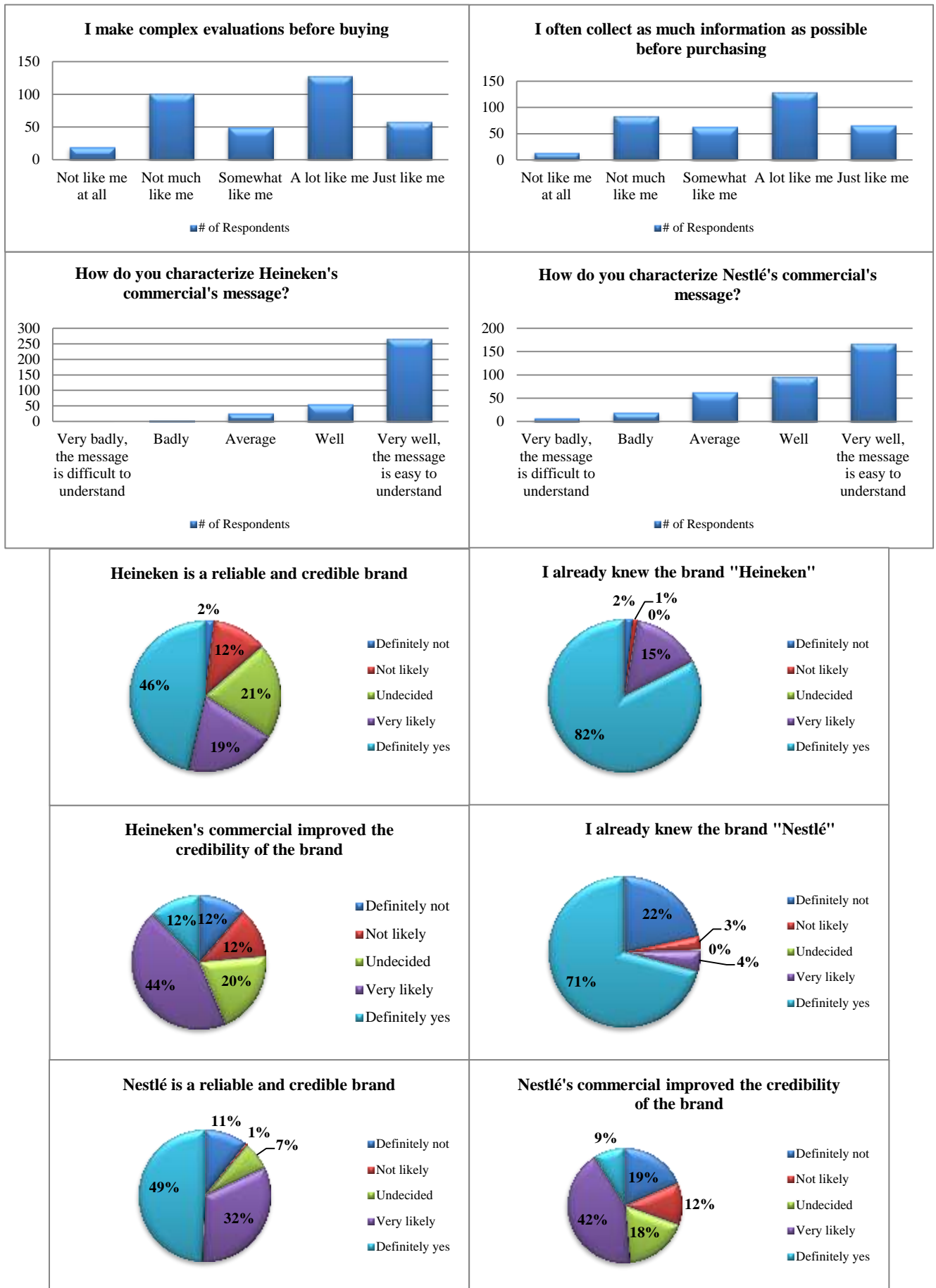
Respondent's Level of Education in Quantitative Analysis

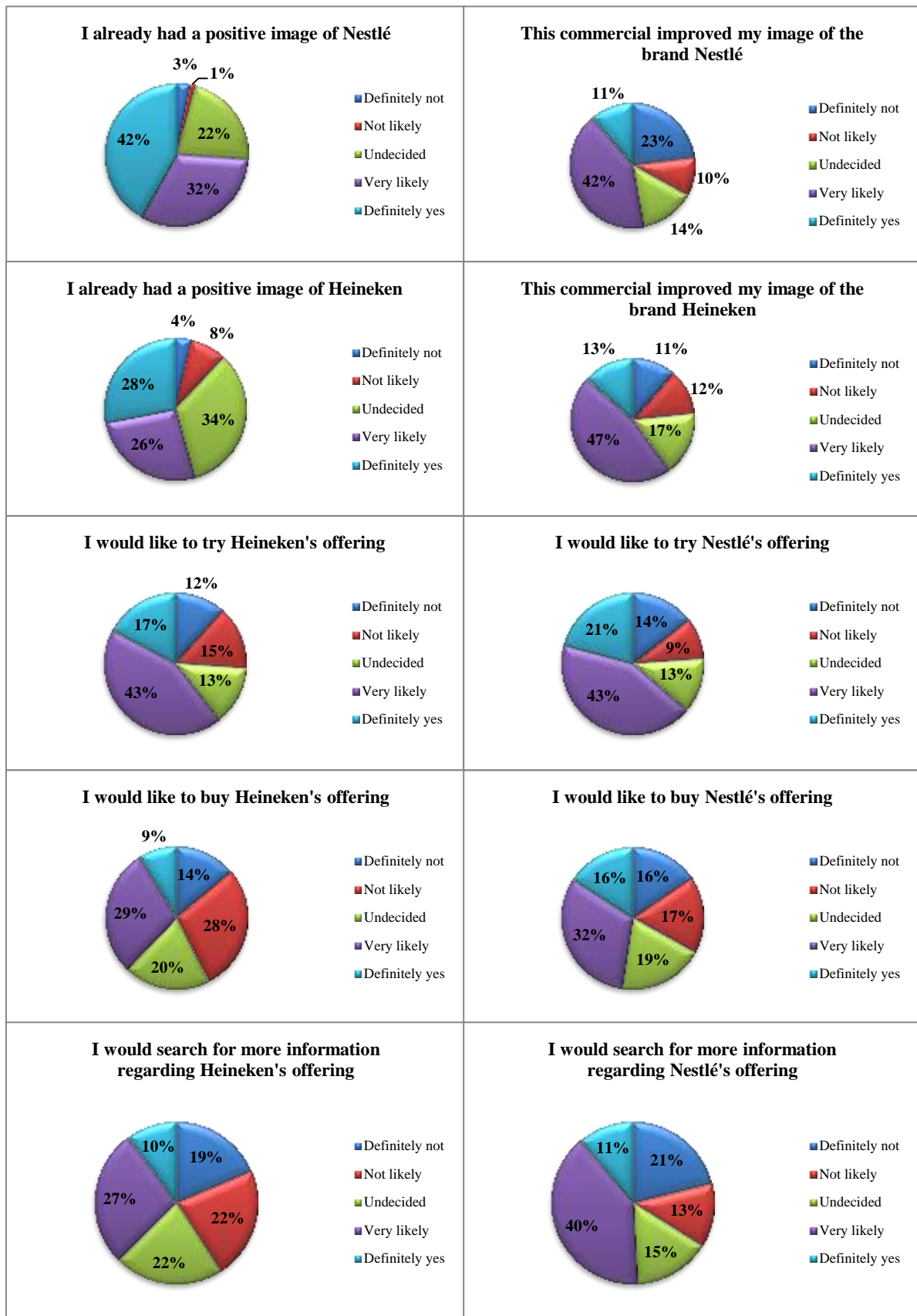


Respondent's Level of Education in Qualitative Analysis









14. Independent-Samples t-test

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{females}} = \mu_{\text{males}}$$

Using the Survey data (scale of 1-5):

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Humor Perception	Female	502	4,18	,901	,040
	Male	218	4,08	,971	,066

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Humor Perception	Equal variances assumed	,000	,991	1,239	718	,216	,093	,075	-,054	,240
	Equal variances not assumed			1,203	386,236	,230	,093	,077	-,059	,244

Using the in-depth interviews data (scale of 0-10):

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Humorscore	Female	13	7,92	2,178	,604
	Male	12	7,33	1,435	,414

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Humorscore	Equal variances assumed	,730	,402	,792	23	,436	,590	,745	-,951	2,130
	Equal variances not assumed			,805	20,902	,430	,590	,733	-,934	2,114

15. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 Output – Correlations between variables**Correlations**

		HumorScore	MessageCom prehension	IntentionToSh are	BrandCredibil ity	ProductLiking	IntentionToPu rchase
HumorScore	Pearson Correlation	1	,575**	,539**	,425**	,440**	,463**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	720	720	720	720	720	720
MessageComprehension	Pearson Correlation	,575**	1	,475**	,303**	,342**	,316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	720	720	720	720	720	720
IntentionToShare	Pearson Correlation	,539**	,475**	1	,319**	,389**	,512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000
	N	720	720	720	720	720	720
BrandCredibility	Pearson Correlation	,425**	,303**	,319**	1	,677**	,320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000
	N	720	720	720	720	720	720
ProductLiking	Pearson Correlation	,440**	,342**	,389**	,677**	1	,380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000
	N	720	720	720	720	720	720
IntentionToPurchase	Pearson Correlation	,463**	,316**	,512**	,320**	,380**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	720	720	720	720	720	720

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

General Overview of this Investigation

Variable in Research	Hypothesis / Research Question	Hypothesis Rejected?	Findings
Persuasion and Intention to Purchase	RQ: Are humorous commercials truly persuasive marketing tools? H: As funnier the advert is perceived, more persuasive it becomes.	No	In line with Biel and Bridgwater (1990) study, people who enjoyed the humorous advertisement are more prone to be persuaded by it. However, humor in advertisement is not by itself a persuasive marketing tool, once consumers carefully evaluate the offerings and make complex evaluations before buying.
Intention to Share and Diffuse the Advert on Social Networks	RQ: Do people usually share humorous commercials with acquaintances? H: As funnier an advert is perceived, the more buzz is generated around it.	No	In line with Hoyer et al. (2013), as the humor content in advertisement is better perceived, the intention to share it increases. Moreover, people usually do and like to spread witty commercials on social networks.
Message Comprehension	RQ: Do humorous commercials jeopardize message comprehension? H: Humorous advertisement enhances message comprehension.	No	Results were found to support Weinberger and Gulas (1992) theory, since humorous contents in advertisement did not damage message comprehension.
Product Liking and Development of Positive Feelings towards the brand	RQ: Are humorous commercials able to change pre-existing judgments and opinions? H: Adverts comprising humor are able to positively shape the brand image.	No	In line with the investigation of Brown and Stayman (1992), adverts comprising comicality were found to positively impact brand image and product liking.
Brand Credibility	RQ: Do funny commercials impact the credibility of the brand? H: Humorous commercials impact positively the brand credibility.	No	As humor perception increases, brand credibility is also boosted. Nevertheless, if the humorous content were perceived as inconvenient or if it touches upon sensitive matters, consumers stated that it is able to damage the credibility of the brand.
Differences in Gender	RQ: Are men and women targeted in the same manner regarding funny adverts? H: Both genders have similar perceptions of humorous commercials.	No	Antagonistically to Whipple and Courtney (1981) theory, humorous contents in the advertisements used in this research were found to be more appreciated by women than by the male audience. Nevertheless, the average humor scores for males and females are not significantly different.